

THE Evangelical Magazine for 1796.

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Ourselves your Servants for Jesus sake 2 Cor. 17. 5.

VOLUME IV.

L O N D O N.

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THE
Evangelical Magazine,

FOR FEBRUARY, 1796.

BIOGRAPHY.

THE REV. WILLIAM SALTREN.

Late Pastor of the Independent Church at Launceston, in the County of Cornwall.

THE Rev. William Saltren was born at Launceston, in the county of Cornwall, on the 13th of January 1755. His grandfather was John Saltren, of Treludick, Esq. many years in the commission of the peace for the said county. His father, Mr. Thomas Saltren, was the youngest son of the above gentleman. He married a Miss Askham, a lady of respectable family; but dying early in life, this Mr. Saltren, his brother, and sister, were left from their infancy to the care of their mother. She carefully instructed them in the duties of morality, and would not suffer them to use such vain and improper words as too often mark the characters of persons who are brought up, as they were, in the established forms of religion. Mr. W. Saltren was kept at school till he was about the age of fifteen. His mother, who designed him for a trade, placed him as an apprentice at Tavistock, in Devonshire, to learn the woollen business. During his apprenticeship, his sobriety and diligence in his master's business were very conspicuous. He was in a respectable family of dissenters, where he had an opportunity of perusing the works of some divines of the last century, which, there is reason to believe, were of some use to him. His brother also lived in Tavistock, and had at times very serious convictions of sin, and of the necessity of religion, which occasioned their separating themselves from other companions, and of their being very much with one another.

confidence in Christ unshaken. Some of his last words were, "Brother, I die in the Lord; I am very happy." So that if any that knew him well, were to ask me, Who are those persons that die in the Lord? I should not hesitate a moment to say, Those that lived and died like Mr. Saltren."

DOWNFAL OF ANTICHRIST.

THE following letter, and that which will appear in our next Number, are written with great modesty and ingenuity; and the calculations they contain have certainly the air of probability; but, though we feel as ardent a wish as the author himself for the downfal of Antichrist, and the spread of the Gospel, yet we do not mean, by inserting them, that our readers should understand that our views and his are in *all* respects coincident.

SIR,

WHEN the disciples put the following question to Christ, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"—he gave them this answer: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." Acts, i. 6, 7. We must not presumptuously inquire into any of those things which God has kept secret; but it is our duty to seek after the knowledge of all those things he has been pleased to reveal. The astonishing events, that are now taking place in the present convulsed state of Europe, are of such a nature and magnitude, and are likely to be followed with such consequences, that they demand the most serious attention. The chief actors in this dreadful controversy among the nations, have, no doubt, certain objects in view. It is possible, however, that something may be done in this awful scene, which neither of the contending parties designed. We find in the Scriptures a number of instances, that when men have intended to accomplish one thing, God, in his providence, has over-ruled their intentions and actions to bring to pass another, and sometimes the very opposite of what they intended. Perhaps something of this kind may be the case, before the present shaking of the nations comes to an end. To pretend to the gift of prophecy is wicked, and to give heed to such pretences is an evidence either of great weakness, or of great blindness of mind. The spirit of prophecy will

will not again be given to any of the sons of men. The system of divine revelation is long ago completed, and an awful threatening is denounced against that man who shall pretend to add any thing to it. Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

There is an intimate connexion between the word and works of God. In the former he makes known the plan of his procedure, by the latter we see how he executes it. Hence they mutually explain and illustrate each other. And, therefore, if we would understand either the one or the other, we must compare them together. This holds good, in a special manner, in relation to the prophecies in Scripture, and particularly with respect to those in which times and events are connected together. Here, after all our care and diligence, we may mistake, by applying events to prophetic times which do not belong to them. This is owing to our not discerning the nature and kind of the events foretold, and which are to happen at such times. Perhaps the following dates, of the times of the rise and fall of Antichrist, may be founded on mistakes of this kind. Yet when we compare the past and the present dispensations of divine Providence with the prophecies, and the prophecies themselves one with another, they seem to have so much probability in them, as not to be unworthy of attention.

The prophets have given several characters of the time when Antichrist would appear. First; that the Roman empire, particularly the western part of it, should be divided into ten kingdoms, or separate governments. The little horn, Dan. vii. 8. 24. was to rise after the other ten. We are, therefore, not to look for his appearance before the year 407. The ten kings did not all arise till about that time.

The subversion of the imperial government of Rome is another character of the time when Antichrist, or the *man of sin*, would appear. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: Only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way. And *then* shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thes. ii. 7, 8. The man of sin could not make his appearance while the imperial government stood in his way. This obstacle was taken out of the way in the year 476, when Odoacer, king of the Heruli, deposed Augustulus the last of the Roman emperors in the west. We may, therefore, conclude from this character of the time, that Antichrist will soon appear; "*then* shall that Wicked be revealed," but not instantly.

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For we must compare with this a third character of the time, given in Rev. xvii. 8—11. "The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." The seven heads of the beast signify both seven mountains, and seven kings, or forms of government. Five of these forms of government were fallen in John's time, viz. Kings, and consuls, and dictators, and ~~desemvirs~~, and military tribunes, with consular authority. One was then existing, viz. emperors. This form of government fell, when Odoacer deposed Augustulus, in the year 476. Odoacer caused himself to be proclaimed king of Italy, but would not assume the purple, or any other mark of imperial dignity. Theodoric, the Goth, defeated and put to death Odoacer, and was acknowledged king of Italy. He and his successors retained the same laws, the same form of government, and the same magistrates, which the Romans had while under the emperors. The Gothic kings chose Ravenna for the seat of their government. They held the dominion of Italy from the year 476 to the year 553, that is 77 years; but they lost the government of Rome in the year 537: So that if we reckon from this year, Rome was under the Gothic government only 61 years.

This seems to be the form of government foretold in the prophecy; it continued only the short space of 61 or 77 years at most. It was a form of government differing only in name from the imperial; and, therefore, if we reckon this a distinct form of government, Antichrist will be *the eighth*; but if we do not so reckon it, he will be *of the seven*.

May not these expressions in the prophecy refer to this time?—"The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit,—the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." The beast had an existence while the imperial government stood; but when it fell, one of his heads was, as it were, wounded to death, Rev. xiii. 3. so that it ceased to exist. The imperial title becoming extinct,
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and the Gothic kings making Ravenna the seat of their government, it might have been rationally expected that Rome would never have become again the mistress of the nations. But when the Goths lost their dominion, Antichrist ascended out of the bottomless pit, the deadly wound was healed, and the beast exists again: Rome regains her power, and exercises it in a more formidable and terrible manner than ever.

If this be a right application of events to the prophecy, then Antichrist arose about the year 537, or at farthest about the year 553. He continues 42 months, or 1260 prophetic days, that is, 1260 years, Rev. xiii. 5; consequently we may expect his fall about the year 1707, or 1813.

These dates seem to receive some support from the prophecy of Daniel. In the last chapter of his book three remarkable periods are mentioned. It seems evident that they all begin at one and the same time. The only difference is, the latter always exceeds in length or duration the preceding, and points out a time when God will accomplish some very eminent event in behalf of his church. They seem to be all given in answer to the question, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" Dan. xii. 6. The sufferings of the saints, and the preservation of the church, especially under the long and tyrannical reign of Antichrist, the downfall of this persecuting power, and the ruin of its supporters; the universal prevalence of the truth, after all the subtle and violent opposition made to it, and the commencement of that happy period, when all people, nations, and languages shall serve our Lord Jesus Christ, Dan. vii. 14. are wonderful dispensations of divine Providence.

Dan. xii. 6, 7. "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." Here mention is made of a period consisting of *a time, times, and an half*; that is, a year, two years, and an half, making in all three years and an half; the same with 42 months, or 1260 days. This is the period of Antichrist's reign, during which he will "scatter the power of the holy people." See Dan. vii. 25. Rev. xi. 2, 3. xii. 6, 14. xiii. 5. At the end of this period; all these things foretold concerning him shall be finished.

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Dan. xii. 11. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." This period takes its date from a time of remarkable apostacy, as the words of the prophecy plainly intimate. And no time so fitly answers this character as the time of Antichrist's rise. This is confirmed by Rev. xi. 2. where we find the court which is without the temple, and the holy city is to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles, or Papists, who, though they are Christians in name, are Gentiles in worship and practice; worshiping angels, saints, and images, and persecuting the followers of Christ. These Gentiles take away the daily sacrifice, and set up the abomination that maketh the visible church of Christ desolate for the space of 1260 years: But this is a longer period by 30 years. Perhaps these 30 years may belong to the time of the seventh vial; at the very beginning of which, or rather just at the end of the 1260 years, and at the beginning of these 30 years, Rome will fall; and during the 30 years, they who still cleave to the abominations of Popery will be cut off by terrible judgments, Rev. xvi. 17---21. xix. 11---21, while the Gospel is preached, attended with power; so that the whole system of Popery shall be abolished for ever.

There is a third period mentioned, Dan. xii. 12. "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." This period extends itself 45 years beyond the preceding, and 75 beyond the reign of Antichrist. During these 45 years, it may be expected, that the Gospel, being rendered effectual by the power of the Spirit of God, will be preached with increasing success throughout the whole earth, so that Deism, Mahometanism, heathen ignorance, superstition, and idolatry shall be brought to an end. Satan shall be bound, and the Millennium commence; for it is said, Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to it.

There remains yet another number to be considered; this is mentioned in Dan. viii. 13, 14. "Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." This period exceeds the longest of the three preceding ones by the space of 965 years. It is most likely, however, that they both end at one time. During the Millennium there is nothing foretold to

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happen,

happen, till the thousand years are ended : Then, indeed, there is to be a great and general defection ; but it seems to be of short continuance. This period, therefore, must take its beginning before the appearance of Antichrist.

The prophecy itself contains a character of the time from whence we are to compute this period. The vision or prophecy is concerning two things that are quite distinct, or rather opposite, the one to the other. The first thing inquired after is, " How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice ?" that is, how long shall it be before the little horn, verse 9, or Antichrist arise and take away the daily sacrifice, by corrupting the purity of divine worship. In the 11th and 12th verses of this prophecy, we are told what this adversary of Christ and his saints would do ; " Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised, and prospered."

The second thing in the question is, " How long shall be the vision concerning the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot ?" The question including these two things in it, the answer is, " Unto two thousand and three hundred days ; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed ;" that is, as I understand it, then shall that glorious and happy time commence, concerning which, it is said, Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to it. Dan. xii. 12.

Thus this long period comprehends all the three periods already noticed, and another of 965 years respecting the daily sacrifice, or the purity of divine worship. During this period the church retains the worship of God according to the rule of the Scripture. " And there was given me a reed like unto a rod : And the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein." Rev. xi. 1.

To this period succeeds another of 1260 years : All this time Antichrist takes away the daily sacrifice, casts down the place of Christ's sanctuary, casts down the truth to the ground, and practises and prospers ; sets up the transgression of desolation, and gives both the sanctuary and host to be trodden under foot. Dan. viii. 11—13. " But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not, for it is given unto the Gentiles : And the holy city shall they tread under foot

not forty and two months," Rev. xi. 2. The two short periods which follow this have been already considered.

The subdivisions of this long period, when arranged in their order of succession, will stand thus,

1. The period of the daily sacrifice,	965
2. The period of Antichrist's reign,	1260
3. A period of 30 years,	- - 30
4. A period of 45 years,	- - 45

Years, 2300

Bishop Newton, the only author I have seen on this subject, conceives these years are to be computed from the vision of the he-goat, or Alexander's invading Asia. Alexander invaded Asia in the year before Christ 334. But what has this invasion to do with the daily sacrifice? nor know we any thing done at that time relating to it? Again, if we compute the 965 years from that time, it will bring us down to the year 631, when Antichrist would be revealed; but this time has nothing so remarkable in it, as to induce us to date his rise from it.

The book of Nehemiah will perhaps furnish a date, from whence we may compute this period. Nehemiah returned from his government in Judea to the court of Persia in the 32d year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, answering to the year before Christ 433. "But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem? for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king: And I came to Jerusalem." Neh. xiii. 6, 7. The Hebrew word rendered days, several times signifies years: Thus, "And it came to pass, at the end of two full years (Heb. two days), that Pharaoh dreamed, and behold, he stood by the river," Gen. xli. 1. "Come to Bethel and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgressions; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years," (Heb. after three days.) Amos iv. 4. The word, therefore, might be translated, *after certain years*. This rendering agrees best with what is said in the beginning of the verse, "But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem?" meaning that he was a considerable time absent. Dean Prideaux supposes it was about five years, and gives his reasons for it. (See his *Connections*, anno 428). If then we admit his supposition, which, for the reasons he gives, has every appearance of being well-founded, this will bring Nehemiah's return to Jerusalem down to the year before Christ 428, when he reformed the abuses committed in the house of God.

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(See his own account of this affair, Neh. xiii. 4---14. In the history now referred to, we have indeed a matter pertaining to the daily sacrifice, or to the worship of God. It is the more remarkable, as it is not only a very important, but the last act of reformation relating to it, that is mentioned in the history of the Old Testament. This circumstance in it, perhaps, deserves particular notice; that Tobiah, an Ammonite, a Gentile, and an enemy, Neh. vi. 1. who hated, scorned, Neh. iv. 3. and opposed the people of God, was at this time turned out of one of the principal chambers of the house of God, where, through the base conduct of Eliashib the priest, he had for some time resided. His residence in such a place might be a principal cause why the Levites were neglected, and why the house of God had been forsaken. A man of Nehemiah's piety and zeal would instantly, upon his arrival at Jerusalem, set himself to reform these abuses.

The daily sacrifice being thus restored to its purity, it remained in the Jewish church till the death of Christ. It then ceased to be with them. Henceforward the daily spiritual sacrifice of prayer, thanksgiving, and new obedience, was offered in the Christian church. Here it continued while the church retained the purity of doctrine and worship revealed and appointed in the Scriptures. But when the generality of professed Christians had departed from the faith and worship of the Gospel, the clergy and monks being the chief promoters of the corruptions introduced into the church, then the man of sin, the bishop of Rome, as the head and chief of this apostacy, stood up against Christ, the Prince of princes, Dan. viii. 25, took away the daily sacrifice, cast down the place of his sanctuary, Dan. viii. 11, and set up the abomination that maketh desolate, Dan. xii. 11. Then was the court which is without the temple given unto the Gentiles. Rev. xi. 2.

If then we compute 965 years, the period of the daily sacrifice, from the year before Christ 428, when Tobiah, a Gentile, was cast out from his residence in the outer court of the temple, this will bring us down to the year 537, when the Gentiles would enter into it again at the appearance of Antichrist. This exactly coincides with the first of the dates we had formerly from Rev. xvii. 8---11; for the Goths lost the dominion of Rome in the year 537. According to these dates of the rise of Antichrist, we may expect his fall in the year 1797.

The book of Nehemiah affords another date, which, in the present inquiry, ought not to be omitted. The first seven weeks of

of Daniel's seventy weeks ended in the year before Christ 409. In this year Nehemiah caused the Jews to put away their strange wives. Neh. xiii. 23---30. This was the last act of his reformation. (See Prideaux, anno 409.) This being nineteen years later than the preceding, relating to the daily sacrifice, brings the rise of Antichrist down to the year 556. This is three years later than the end of the Gothic kingdom in Italy. His fall, according to this date, will be in the year 1816.

This long period of 2300 days does not end at the fall of Rome. It comprehends in it the two shorter periods formerly noticed, viz. the thirty years supposed to belong to the seventh vial. During this season, terrible judgments will fall upon the remaining party of the Antichristians, Rev. xvi. 17---21. while the Gospel shall have great success among others. Perhaps, between the ending of the preceding period and the beginning of this, the three following events may take place about the same time: 1. The fall of Antichrist. 2. The conversion of the Jews, Rom. xi. 15. 3. The resurrection of the witnesses, Rev. xi. 11, 12. The two last events shall be accomplished not by human influence; "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Zech. iv. 6.

We have reason to expect, from many prophecies in Scripture, that in the fourth and last period of forty-five years, the Gospel will be preached with the most wonderful, rapid, and increasing success throughout the whole earth. At the end of this period the Millennium commences; "And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Then shall be fulfilled all that is foretold concerning the glory of the church of Christ in the latter days. Many prophecies have evidently a particular respect to this time, such as the following: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.---The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious." Isa. lx. 1---3. 13. (See the whole chapter.) "For, from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure

pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. i. 11. These and the like Scriptures will best explain what is intended by the expression, "*Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*"

This is, indeed, a vision or prophecy for many days, Dan. viii. 26. extending (if this computation of the time be right) from Nehemiah's reformation of the temple-worship, or of the Jewish state, to the happy period when truth and peace shall universally prevail, and connecting in one harmonious and beautiful system, the history, the worship, and the prophecies of the Old Testament with those of the New.

Fearing that I have already trespassed too much on your time and patience, I shall postpone the consideration of the remaining part of this interesting subject to another opportunity; and am,

Dear Sir,

Your sincere friend,

Wooler, June 24, 1795.

GEORGE BELL.

A PROPER BEHAVIOUR IN PLACES OF WORSHIP,

THE TRUE CHARACTERISTIC OF A GENTLEMAN.

ONE would hardly think it possible that any who pretend to the title of gentlemen, could act with levity in a place dedicated to the Supreme Being; the idea of which should inspire, if not with sentiments of awe, at least with a serious temper. But it is evident from the following account, that there are those who frequent the sacred temples of religion, with a disposition unbecoming a ball-room.

For some time past I have attended at a meeting-house not many miles from the metropolis, where the only object appeared to be a serious attention to religious duties. But the presence of two or three families, lately arrived from London, has occasioned so great an alteration, that it has more the appearance of a playhouse, than of a place devoted to the worship of God. I shall not attempt to send you a full account of their proceedings, as I do not wish to give any personal offence; but if this should happen to pass within their notice, I hope it will be the means of terminating a conduct equally unbecoming the gentleman as the Christian.

One of these petite maitres is continually gazing, with a look of wonderful sagacity, through a glass which he holds in the most conceited manner at some modest female; while his